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AN EARLY ANNUNCIATION BY ALESSO BALDOVINETTI

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Emilio Burci, who has preserved for us so many glimpses of the vanished Florence of the nineteenth century, sat down one day in 1843 on the steps of the Baptistery and sketched in pen and sepia wash the south wall of the Piazza S. Giovanni where the slit of the crowded Calzaiuoli broke through to the Piazza Signoria.¹ On the steps on the Loggia del Bigallo, whose sculptured arches had long been bricked up, he saw piled helter-skelter the wares of a picture-dealer. Great Seicento canvases with gilt frames rolling their curves around colossal figures, little landscapes and Venuses which had lost their frames entirely, and a triptych or two leaned against the steps in the hot, dusty air. Some such scene must be wedged into the history of many of the pictures now so carefully nursed by restorers and housed in air-conditioned galleries or richly carpeted mansions. One casual *souvenir d'Italie* was brought back to Hungary in the middle of the last century by an officer serving under Garibaldi in his campaigns to liberate southern Italy from Bourbon domination. The Hungarian's memento was a little panel² repre-

¹cf. Plate LXIV, Corrado Ricci, *Cento vedute di Firenze antica*, Florence (Alinari) 1906.

²23 $\frac{3}{8}$ " x 20 $\frac{1}{2}$ ".

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senting the Annunciation which has now come into the hands of Wildenstein & Company in New York (Figure 1). It bore no painter's name until last summer³; students of Florentine painting were even unaware of its existence. But its rediscovery is one of those happy turns of fortune for which the scholar always hopes, for it brings to us an early work by a master, Alesso Baldovinetti, whose production was originally too small and which has subsequently suffered more than its proportionate share of loss and decay.

Youthful work is particularly interesting and particularly elusive. To see the germ of later ideas, to watch the first solution of pictorial problems which later turn into canons of taste, to trace the shadow of the master who has until now stood behind the young painter's shoulder, are all fascinating experiences for the historian of art who must find the links that bind year to year, and for the critic who must understand each facet of the artist's personality as it externalizes itself in his art. Fresh discoveries of documents or forgotten pictures often illuminate these formative years in an artist's life in unexpected ways. Until a confluence of evidence recently forced a rearrangement of Lippi's chronology⁴, critics were disposed to believe that the young Carmelite monk had preferred to Masaccio's frescoes in his own convent church the panels of the Dominican Angelico up the hill at Fiesole, with the result that Masaccio's brilliant achievements seemed to have been neglected in Florence, except by Donatello and Alberti, until at least a decade after his death; but it is now inescapably clear that Lippi began as a fumbling, stumbling imitator of those frescoes of Masaccio's which had been before his eyes all through his novitiate in the Carmine, and that the delicacy of color and line and sentiment which mark the most pleasing phase of his work was a late flowering, the proper prelude to his pupil Botticelli's delicious melancholy. The Wildenstein Baldovinetti is not so revolutionary, but it does strengthen the emphasis which must be placed on certain recognized aspects of this painter's work.

It has always been assumed that the three scenes which Alesso contributed to the doors of the silver cupboard for the chapel of the SS. Annunziata must have been done while he was still a young man.⁵ Although no specific documentary evidence supported the belief — indeed the only preserved document might be disquieting since it refers to a payment for the hinges

³When Mr. Berenson saw a photograph and proposed the name of Baldovinetti.

⁴cf. the entire March issue of the *Rivista d'Arte* of 1936 in which articles by Salmi, Fiocco, Pudielko, Poggi and Zanocco appeared treating this topic.

⁵cf. R. W. Kennedy, *Alesso Baldovinetti*, New Haven (Yale University), 1938, for information and documents concerning this artist.

of the cupboard as late as 1462 — it has been supposed that the doors were painted between 1448, when Piero de' Medici was accorded the patronage rights of the chapel, and 1452, when the chapel was consecrated. The present *Annunciation* adds support to this surmise. All four panels, the three now at S. Marco and the one here in New York, share the same spirit of untouched youth, and many particular passages in them can be matched detail for detail, like the faces of the profiled angels in the *Annunciation* and the *Baptism*, the slight, boneless hands in all the scenes, the sprig-like trees and the tufted clouds in the *Annunciation*, the *Baptism* and the *Transfiguration* (Figure 3). Even more significant is the fact that none of these "little stories" shows a trace of the style of Andrea del Castagno which exercised so powerful an influence on Baldovinetti after the two painters had become partners sometime before June of 1454.

Two entries in Alesso's account-book between 1448 and 1454 — the period in which the Silver Chest and Hungarian panel thus seem to fall — struck Milanese as worth recording when he made his transcription from the manuscript book which has since been lost from the files of the Hospital of S. Paolo, the heir to the painter's property. In July, 1449, when he had been a year and some months a member of the painter's guild, he noted a curious transaction between himself and a certain Bernardo de' Ricci. A sulphur cast made by Tommaso Finiguerra, apparently at his own expense, was exchanged by Alesso for a poignard which this Bernardo had offered to sell him. The transaction itself is mystifying, but its implications are clear: Baldovinetti evidently knew the famous goldsmith who is credited with having invented the process of casting in sulphur from niello plates, and he may even have had some kind of financial relationship with him. The other notice, made in the following year, refers to an altarpiece, now lost, which Alesso furnished for the Pieve of Borgo S. Lorenzo di Mugello on which a S. Ansano was flanked by "six little stories." Both notices appear to have a bearing on the new *Annunciation*.

It would only be wishful thinking to assert boldly that this little scene once formed a part of the S. Ansano altarpiece, but the wooden support of the pigment itself offers some curious evidence which tempts one to the very edge of the thought. The top, bottom and left sides of the panel have been sawn through, in not very recent times, leaving only the right side with its inevitable worm-holes intact. The antiquarians of a more careless age are now notorious for having dismembered altarpieces to promote sales, and most small pictures which we now possess from the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries once formed parts of some larger whole. The shape of the *Annun-*

ciation panel, taller than it is wide, would seem to preclude its having been a section of a predella, even if the cutting did not imply that it was once part way up the right side of an altarpiece or cupboard door of the *Annunziata* type.⁶ Altarpieces in which small scenes at the side occur were distinctly old-fashioned or provincial in Baldovinetti's time⁷, or were created for private devotion in the humbler media of sulphur cast and paper print. A number of prints in which the *Annunciation* occurs in such a position are still in existence⁸, but the theme of the whole complex is usually the glorification of the Virgin herself rather than of another saint. However, it must be admitted that the *Annunciation* is so pivotal a moment in the great Christian drama and has so universal a relevance that its inclusion as an incidental scene in almost any altarpiece appears to have been frequently regarded as appropriate.

Whether or not the panel was once a part of the S. Ansano or some other unrecorded altarpiece also painted in these early years, its character is certainly determined in part by the implications of that other entry in Alesso's notebook, and throws into sharper focus the figure of Finiguerra as an important influence in his life. Finiguerra's own accomplishment may still be unidentified but we do possess a good many drawings, prints, and nielli which must have emanated from his circle during the fifteen years of his active career and which give us some basis for comparison with this picture. The dream-world architecture where steps are too high to climb, loggias end nowhere, towers and roofs pile on top of each other with no regard to scale, and rooms are rhomboids and never rectangles, which we have seen in the Nineveh and Troy and other ancient cities drawn by the anonymous associate of Finiguerra in the *Florentine Picture Chronicle*⁹, is repeated here in the curious portico in which the Virgin stands, in the inexplicable structure behind the useless wall, and in the cloister to the left where an arch springs to meet nothing but the picture frame. In Baldovinetti's preposterous lectern, the goldsmith's repertory of acanthus leaves which turn into brackets and vases and dragon's feet has been used with somewhat less tropical lushness and somewhat more inconsequence than in the *Chronicle's* fan-

⁶The Hungarian panel cannot have been a part of the *Annunziata* cupboard because the panels preserved in the Museum of S. Marco in Florence include an *Annunciation* painted by the weakest of the four Angelesque pupils who participated in the work.

⁷cf. Berenson, *Three Essays in Method*, I, Oxford, 1927, for a Neapolitan and a Veronese example.

⁸Hind, *Early Italian Engraving*, Vol. II, Plates 11 and 12.

⁹Published by Sidney Colvin, London, 1898. cf. Plates 9, 18, 19, 33, 91, 92. Colvin believed the draughtsman to have been Finiguerra himself. Other critics have been more hesitant. One wonders why the name of the partner of both Finiguerra and Pollaiuolo, Pietro di Bartolommeo di Sali has never been proposed.

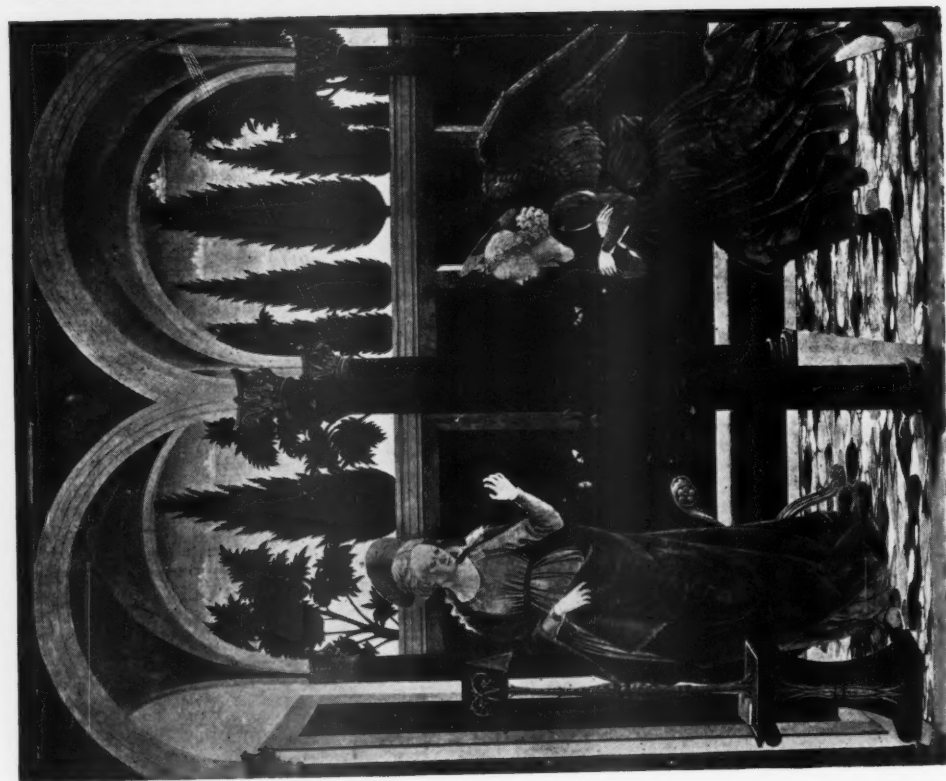


FIG. 2. BALDOVINETTI: ANNUNCIATION
Uffizi, Florence



FIG. 3. BALDOVINETTI: BAPTISM FROM SILVER CHEST
Museo San Marco, Florence

tastic furniture or in those extraordinary stage properties which fill a number of early engravings.¹⁰ Other resemblances are less easily identified, but a haunting likeness pervades both the "Finiguerra" work and the Baldovinetti *Annunciation* in the understanding of human proportions, the youthful and unindividualized types, the folding of the garments' hems upon the floor¹¹, the ornamental scrolls miraculously upheld without a breath of wind, and the tilting of the substantial haloes.

This heightened sense of the importance of Baldovinetti's relationship to the Finiguerra group which the new *Annunciation* brings, leads us to search for further examples. Very close to Baldovinetti is a pen drawing, quite unusual in Renaissance iconography, of three men saddling a loaded mule and assisting it to rise, a sheet which lately came to the Louvre from the E. de Rothschild Bequest.¹² The drawing corresponds in action and placing of the figures to a niello from the same collection, but the size has been so reduced and the finesse and flavor so thoroughly lost that one realizes how little the silver translation must usually have been like the draughtsman's cartoon in these interchanges between the arts. The drawing has a delicacy of line, and a small, compact type of figure which does recall Baldovinetti's *Silver Chest* figures, but it also has a kind of lithe reality which one hesitates to associate with an artist usually more diagrammatic in his taste, and which seems to correspond more closely with the tense, agile drawings which Pollaiuolo made in the years of his early maturity. It might come from a still earlier period of Antonio's life when his time was almost exclusively devoted to goldsmith work. But if we cannot be sure that Baldovinetti provided some niellist with the drawing for the plaque in question, another less important but somewhat more attractive work in the medium seems to offer a better claim to inclusion in his œuvre. A niello pendant belonging to the British Museum, bears on one side the Veronica handkerchief and on the reverse an inscription and a rosette. The sudarium with the face of Christ is enough like the medallion from Baldovinetti's *Baptistery* mosaic of 1453 and the rosette is enough like those on the frame of the *Nativity* in the Servi to suggest that, in this instance, he did supply a drawing which was used by a niellist, not necessarily Finiguerra. The diffi-

¹⁰cf. the Linus, Musaeus, Joseph and Achilles in the *Chronicle* and the engravings of the Triumphs, the Planets, Pilate, etc.

¹¹cf. especially the Nebuchadnezzar in the *Chronicle*.

¹²Originally published by A. Blum, *Gaz. d. B. A.*, 1933, p. 224. Berenson, *Drawings of the Florentine Painters*, Chicago, 1938, regards the drawing as a copy of a drawing made by Baldovinetti for the niello. Hind, *Nielli, Sulphur Casts and Prints in the British Museum*, London, 1936, describes the drawings as in the same style as the so-called Finiguerra drawings in the Uffizi.

culty of reading the original draughtsman's style in the altered lines on the silver or the copper, hampers us in tracing other plaques or prints to his personal invention, but over and over again one feels the kinship of his artistic outlook with that of the goldsmiths of the 'fifties, and even of the 'sixties and 'seventies, who produced these silver and copper engravings. A Virgin in a brocaded gown and plain cloak¹³ so like the Servi Mary's; a Nativity¹⁴ where the Virgin and Child bear the same relation as the holy pair in Alesso's fresco; angels with Alesso's favorite long dresses; cypresses, vases, buildings, costumes, poses in scenes from the life of the Virgin¹⁵ which constantly recall the *Silver Chest* scenes; bearded patriarchs¹⁶ who seem drawn from the same mental image as Baldovinetti's S. Miniato and S. Trinita figures; ornate shrines¹⁷ constructed with the same fantasy as his painted window for the Pazzi chapel heap up the circumstantial evidence. The engravings contain echoes of the work of other contemporary artists who were associated in one way or another with Baldovinetti: the unknown cartoonist of the Old Testament windows of the Pisan Duomo¹⁸, some anonymous cassone painters, Lippi¹⁹, Pesellino²⁰, Botticini²¹, Domenico di Michelino²², and Giovanni di Francesco²³ — no more than one of them leaders in the great drama of the Renaissance, some of them more craftsmen than artists, but all of them typical of the Florence of the 'fifties and early 'sixties of the fifteenth century. Also a member of this more or less conscious group must have been the builder and carver, Giuliano da Maiano, who appears with his brother-in-law Finiguerra in Baldovinetti's account-books in 1461 and 2 in connection with the intarsias of the *Duomo Sacristy* on which they all collaborated.²⁴ It is possible that insufficient attention has been paid to Giuliano as a factor in the group, and that the group of drawings in the Uffizi so hesitatingly

¹³Hind, *Engravings*, etc., Vol. III, Plate 257.

¹⁴Hind, *Engravings*, etc., Vol. II, Plate 71.

¹⁵Hind, *Engravings*, etc., Vol. II, Plate 12; Nielli, etc., Plate 6.

¹⁶Hind, *Engravings*, etc., Vol. II, Plate 17A; Nielli, etc., 219.

¹⁷Hind, Nielli, etc., frontispiece and *Colvin Chronicle*, etc., Plate 24 (Aaron).

¹⁸Hind, Nielli, etc., 276.

¹⁹Hind, Nielli, etc., frontispiece; *Engravings*, etc., Vol. II, Plate 12. Lippi, rather than Angelico as Hind believes, seems to me to be behind these prints.

²⁰Hind, *Engravings*, etc., Vol. III, Plate 196.

²¹Hind, *Engravings*, etc., Vol. III, Plate 204.

²²Hind, *Engravings*, etc., Vol. II, Plate 57. Baldovinetti is certainly indirectly connected with this engraving. He supplied the drawing for the figure of Dante in Domenico di Michelino's painting in the Duomo after which the engraving was made; he guaranteed Domenico's good faith when the contract was made; and, in company with Neri di Bicci, he estimated the finished product as worth 20 lire more than the stipulated 100, because of the many inventions which Domenico had added of his own accord to the original design. The documents are published in full by R. Altrocchi, *Speculum*, January, 1931.

²³Hind, Nielli, etc., 5, 6.

²⁴The style of the drawings is actually closer to that of the intarsias in which Finiguerra participated than to any of the preserved engravings.

attributed to Finiguerra (when they are not pushed into the school of his partner, Pollaiuolo) were actually executed in Giuliano's workshop in the early 'sixties. When one considers the occupations of the *garzoni* who have acted as models, they are engaged either in drawing or in working wood, exactly the tasks they would have been required to perform in Giuliano's shop.

Baldovinetti must have been in contact with Finiguerra all through the goldsmith's career, at least from the barter episode in 1450 to Maso's death in 1464, but the influence of the Finiguerra group on the character of his painting seems to have been most effective only in the earlier part of this period when the New York *Annunciation* was painted. Just as there is very little left in this picture of the Angelesque, except in the motive of the inaccessible potted plants on a garden wall²⁵, and hardly anything from Domenico Veneziano's repertory, except the fresh tonality of the flesh and hair and the polychrome mouldings and the pinkish tone of the pavement and the cloister, so very little remains of the lavishness of the goldsmith's taste in the pictures painted after Alesso came into the orbit of Castagno. After Andrea's death, Baldovinetti's style was less plastic and less subject to profound changes of taste, but it would appear that in the two years following the loss of his partner, he was still susceptible to the ideas of artists whom he admired. Especially in the *Madonna* formerly in the Mackay Collection and now a part of the Kress Foundation, there is a noticeable flavor of Giovanni di Francesco, who had himself formed a compound of styles from the decisively modelled gigantism of Castagno and the intricate delicacy of Lippi's later phase. But after Giovanni's early death in 1460 and the formulation of the *Servi Nativity* in 1461, all these elements melted into a new artistic alloy which we recognize as Baldovinetti's own unmistakable, individual style.

The New York *Annunciation* offers an interesting comparison with the *Annunciation* which Alesso painted for the convent church of S. Giorgio sulla Costa four or five years later (Figure 2). Smaller pictures are always freer than large altarpieces like the Uffizi panel, but more than size accounts for the difference in spontaneity between the two. Contact with Castagno had disciplined Alesso's taste and hand in the intervening years. Not only is the form of the bodies more coherent and solid because he has accepted Andrea's ideal of mass and volume, but also because he has come to admire, through him, absolute clarity of form. The sweet childishness of this Virgin

²⁵A motive which frequently recurs in the work of Angelico or his shop; the particular form which Baldovinetti uses occurs notably in the *Naming of St. John*, in the Museum of S. Marco, Florence, which appears to have been done before Andrea di Giusto's variant in Prato of 1435.

— who might well have no more than the thirteen years allotted to her by the Gospel of James — has thus become, in the later version, a serene dignity because the scant shadowing of the earlier modelling has given place to broad, simple planes of contrasting tone and to firmly accented lines. In both pictures, the general shape of the coiffures is much the same, but the S. Giorgio Gabriel's curls have a neat precision that the earlier angel's lack; and the Uffizi Virgin's fluted waves carve out a rhythmic profile along her shoulder while the New York Virgin's locks merely lie against the curve of her neck in a vague passage of yellow ochre mixed with grey.²⁶ The folds of the early Virgin's cloak fall in a succession of the same blunt curves which Alesso always favored, but they are not drawn with the succinctness of line which is so striking in the later work, nor is the theme developed with the expertness and ingenuity with which it is handled in the trailing hem of the Uffizi garment. In the later picture, there is no such appealing *gaucherie* as the white ribbon which inexplicably crosses in this Gabriel's skirt. The perspective of the later work is not without mechanical flaws — either Castagno had not passed on to his companion the formula which he had learned from Donatello or Alberti²⁷, or the younger man's mind shrank from the strict geometrical process involved — but, in the arrangement of the loggia outside the Virgin's room and of the parapetted rose bed before the panelled wall of the Uffizi *Annunciation*, there are no such flights of irrational fancy as in this picture, where the point of view changes as the observer looks first at the Virgin and then at the angel. Even the trees have grown. The boughs may still be slender, but they have more than reed-like girth; the leaves have not yet that Chinese economy so striking in the Servi *Nativity*, but they are more strategically placed, and, having more art, they seem more natural. The whole scheme has been determined more by art than by accident (there is hardly an axis in the New York *Annunciation*!) and so the air of credibility, if not the naïve charm, is intensified. Baldovinetti was to go further than the S. Giorgio panel in this direction, and in the *Annunciation* of the Portuguese Chapel at S. Miniato of the next decade, his fine spacing and simplicity of form mark the climax of his artistic development. It was a position he could not hold. He slipped first into static emptiness and then relaxed into a chaotic richness from which the loveliness of his youthful work had died away.

²⁶cf. head of the Virgin in the tarsia *Annunciation* which is a work of collaboration between Finiguerra and Baldovinetti in 1464.

²⁷Castagno must have acquired his own theoretical knowledge of perspective quite suddenly, between the painting of the upper tier of frescoes in the Cenacolo of S. Apollonia and the Cena below, for the Passion scenes above hold the wall in traditional style, while the Last Supper cuts through the wall just as Alberti advises.

But if the New York *Annunciation* is a more spontaneous and original work than the S. Giorgio altarpiece, and is less shaped by the prevailing canons of Florentine taste and by Alesso's own mature style, it shows us all the more clearly some of his permanent personal preferences. He was always to choose a sunny garden — half green, half stone — as the setting for the angelic greeting; fruit trees and cypresses and springing grass were always to adorn his pictures if the subject matter in any way permitted; tiered clouds, colored marbles, disk haloes of shaded ochre, ash blond hair, rose-cream skin, small hands, and sloe-brown eyes were never to fail him. Most significant of all, it is clear that a graceful spacing of each detail in a picture was a continuous element in his style even before he came to see the panel as a whole. The charming profile of the angel against the dark green panel, framed by green-grey moulding, set the precedent in his mind for the more imposing profile of the S. Miniato angel and for the more incisive profile of the London portrait. The actual feeling for the color spaces, the cutting of the frame by the halo and the up-flaring wings, is no less sensitive than in those later works when his line is surer and his modelling more compact. The lily breaks out against the triple moulding of the wall with a perfect sense of timing and of balance. The wordless scroll cuts across the open panel of the wall and turns upon itself without a hair-breadth of error even if without the surgical precision of line which bounds the heraldic pattern in the London lady's dress. The pots upon the wall and the trees that rise above it have a delightful freedom, but betray a very knowing sense of balance; and the clouds behind them climb the sky at just the right intervals to make light accents to play against the dark green leaves. Throughout the picture there are passages which delight us not only as promises of perfection yet to come, but as instinctive realizations of original artistic ideas.

So the new *Annunciation* puts us somewhat farther ahead in our knowledge of this Florentine painter. A picture done between 1449 and 1454, as a part of some larger whole, and emerging from oblivion by a fortunate chance, has confirmed us in the belief that Baldovinetti was an active member of the Finiguerra circle for at least a brief period; it has demonstrated more graphically the subsequent influence of Castagno in the final shaping of Baldovinetti's manner; and it has made us more certain that the painter's natural gifts were for spacing and arrangement of tones and colors and areas. By its own charm and its reflection of that wonderful Renaissance freshness of spirit which, in a black world, could find life good and art important, it has added one more blessing to our cherished heritage.

AN EARLY WORK BY VERROCCHIO

BY W. R. VALENTINER

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The collection of Italian Renaissance sculptures in the Louvre contains a small fifteenth century marble relief of unusually fresh and spirited composition (Fig. 1). It represents the nude figure of Neptune, holding, in one hand, a trident, in the other, a dolphin with mouth open to spout water, and standing on a shell drawn over the waves by two other dolphins. The youthful god seems to drift with the wind like a sail; his chest is pressed forward, his arms are pushed back, in order to intensify the swift movement. The swelling outlines of the legs express the strain of his muscles (Fig. 2), yet the movement of the body appears natural and light, as though the figure were suspended in the air and did not need the shell as a base to stand upon. He holds his attributes in his hands like toys, regardless of the struggles of the young dolphin which seems enraged because taken out of his element (Fig. 3).

The open mouths of the three dolphins used as waterspouts prove that the relief formed the upper part of a wall fountain. Its lower part, the basin standing in front of it, is missing.

In the Louvre catalogue the relief has been tentatively attributed to Federighi, the greatest Sienese sculptor next to Jacopo della Quercia, whose style, however, is much heavier, more monumental and less refined in detail. Federighi belongs to a somewhat earlier generation and lacks in his works the preciousness which in our relief points to those leading sculptors of the second half of the fifteenth century in Florence who were trained as goldsmiths and impressed their subtle and precise style upon the art of their time.

The motive of the spouting dolphin wriggling in the grasp of its captor at once brings to mind Verrocchio's bronze cupid in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence and even the pose of the Neptune has something of the airy swing of this figure. Only in this instance the movement is still bolder, the winged boy balancing himself lightly upon one foot. If the relief is, as I believe, a work of Verrocchio, it antedates the bronze statue by several years and belongs to his early period. The marble lavabo in S. Lorenzo in Florence, executed for the Medici between 1464 and 1469, shows inside the basin two dolphins with open mouths, similar to those on our relief. As we know, Verrocchio was at this time occupied with orders he received from the Medici for the decoration of their country seats, especially for the Villa Carreggi. From there came the terracotta relief representing the Resurrec-



FIG. 1. VERROCCHIO: NEPTUNE (Marble)
Louvre, Paris



FIG. 2. VERROCCHIO: DETAIL OF NEPTUNE
Louvre, Paris

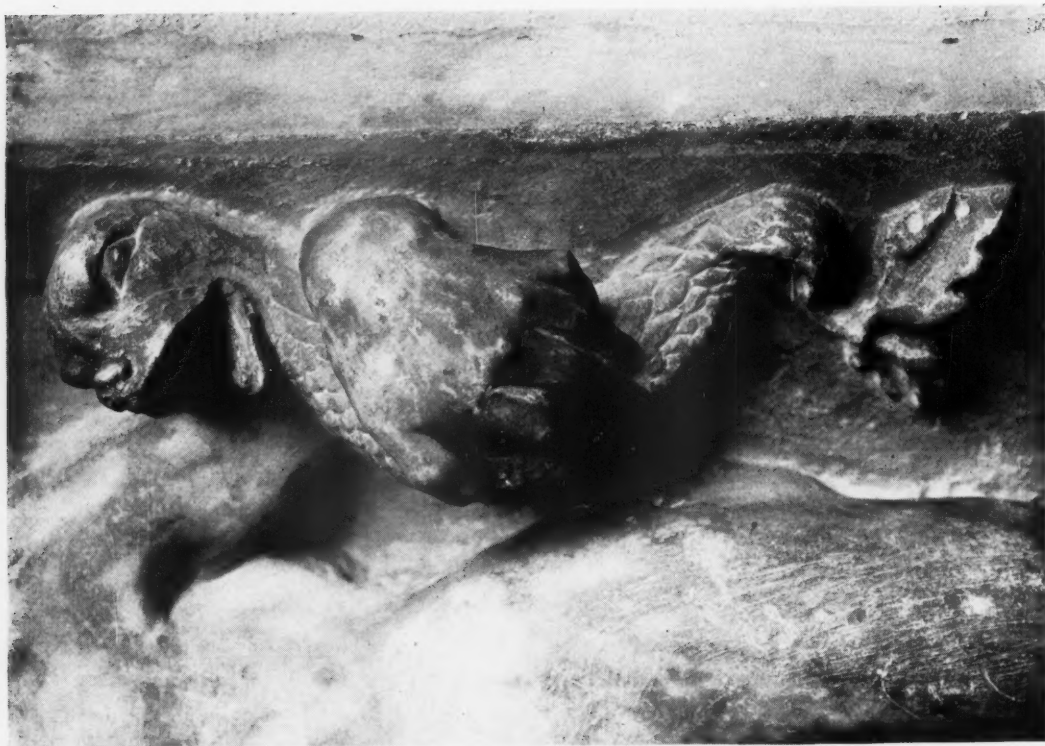


FIG. 3. VERROCCHIO: DETAIL OF NEPTUNE
Louvre, Paris



FIG. 4. VERROCCHIO: DETAIL OF NEPTUNE
Louvre, Paris



FIG. 5. VERROCCHIO: DETAIL OF NEPTUNE
Louvre, Paris



FIG. 6. VERROCCHIO: RESURRECTED CHRIST
Museo Nazionale, Florence



FIG. 7. VERROCCHIO: MADONNA AND CHILD
Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin



FIG. 8. VERROCCHIO: BAPTISM
OF CHRIST (Detail)
Uffizi, Florence

tion, now in the Museo Nazionale (Bargello), in which the figure of Christ (Fig. 6) shows similar anatomical features to our Neptune. The proportions of the short, meager body with large hands and feet are the same, and it would be difficult to find a closer analogy among the sculptures of this period than the curved lines of the legs and the modeling of the knees, calves and toes. The formation of the legs, typical for Verrocchio, can be found as well in other works of the artist executed in different materials, like the bronze figure of David in the Museo Nazionale (Bargello) or the painting representing the Baptism of Christ in the Uffizi (Fig. 8). In comparing our marble figure with the David we still find the same proportions, although the bronze statue should be dated about ten years later, and, in addition, certain characteristics of the anatomy as the protruding muscles of the neck and the pronounced line running from the collarbone to the navel. This clear continuous line does not show in the photographs of the David but in the original if seen in the correct light. Unmistakable in our relief is the curiously mannered pose of the left hand with the curved forefinger and angular little finger (Fig. 3). We observe this feature not only in the David but also in the early terracotta of a sleeping boy in the Berlin Museum which must be nearly contemporary with our relief.

At first sight the head and facial type of the Neptune seem unusual (Figs. 4, 5). We are inclined to associate with Verrocchio the rather round face with straight pointed nose, the low forehead and the neck covered with long curly hair, found in the David. If the curls in our relief do not stand out from the head quite as freely, we should remember that the marble technique does not adapt itself as easily to such a treatment of the hair as bronze and terracotta. If we compare the Madonna paintings of the early period, for instance, the one in the Berlin Museum (Fig. 7), we find a not dissimilar treatment of the hair of the Christ Child. In such early works we also observe the broad nose and high forehead characteristic of the Neptune, and of the Madonna in the Berlin picture, while the long protruding upper lip and the corners of the mouth, slightly drawn up, occur in Verrocchio's types during all periods. However different the subject and the technique of the Neptune and the Christ Child in the Berlin painting may be, the same artist's hand can be recognized in the design of the outlines of the bodies, especially if we compare the right side of the child with the corresponding one of the Neptune.

During the last generation more scholarly research has been devoted to Verrocchio than to any of the other Quattrocento sculptors. The result has been a remarkable change in the reconstruction of his "work." This becomes

apparent if we pass through the pages of the last and best biography of the artist published by Maud Cruttwell in 1904. A considerable number of sculptures given in this book to Verrocchio appear now to be by other artists; others said to be lost have been rediscovered. To the first group belong such reliefs as the Deposition from the Cross in Urbino, the Flagellation in Venice, and the Discord in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, all three of which have been recognized as works of Francesco di Giorgio, or the monumental bronze head of a horse in Naples which is neither by Donatello, as Vasari believed, nor by Verrocchio, to whom it was attributed by Cruttwell, but is of ancient Roman origin. Among the rediscoveries of the second group may be counted such important works as the marble relief representing Alexander the Great, now in the collection of Mrs. Herbert N. Straus in New York; the drawing for a monument of a Doge in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; the bronze candelabrum executed for the Palazzo Vecchio, formerly in the Berlin Museum, now in the collection of the late Dr. F. Mannheimer, Amsterdam; and the Red Marsyas, a Roman statue restored by Verrocchio for the Medici, now in the Uffizi in Florence. Helpful for the identification of works by Verrocchio, executed upon orders of the Medici, is the list which his brother, Tommaso Verrocchio, delivered to the City of Florence in 1495. Most of the items mentioned in this document have now been identified with great probability, excepting those objects which were of ephemeral character like wax masks and appurtenances for tournaments. Six out of the fifteen items of this list refer to such objects. One item alone describes a painted portrait representing a favorite of Lorenzo de' Medici, Lucrezia dei Donati; this has not yet been identified. Among the remaining eight items three refer to the Medici tombs in S. Lorenzo in Florence. The other five, with which the list begins, are the following: 1. the bronze David (now in the Bargello), 2, the restored Red Marsyas (in the Uffizi), 3. the bronze putto with dolphin (in the Palazzo Vecchio), 4. a marble figure which jets water, and 5. a story in relief representing several figures, which it has been suggested should be identified with the terracotta relief of the Resurrection from the Villa Carreggi (now in the Bargello).

There is then only one item, number 4, which has not been identified. If the Louvre relief, here published, has been attributed correctly to Verrocchio, it is very likely that we can recognize in it the "figura di marmo che gietta acqua" of the Verrocchio list.





FIG. 2. ATHENA ON A PANATHENAIC AMPHORA



FIG. 1. MARBLE STATUE OF ATHENA
Gemäldegalerie, Dresden

A STATUE OF ATHENA GIGANTOPHONOS

BY GEORGE W. ELDERKIN
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There was an ancient tradition among the Greeks that their gods had fought and defeated the giants. The latter were conceived as monsters of violence and insolence although they were the sons of the earth goddess Gaia. These giants stormed heaven but were smitten by Zeus and other Olympians, and then buried under volcanic mountains or under islands. Their defeat became a popular theme in Greek art. When depicted in painting or relief the scene might consist of many figures or be abbreviated to a single pair of combatants in which Zeus with a thunderbolt, Athena with a spear, or some other deity pursues and strikes down a giant. This abbreviation was carried still further when even in the archaic period statuettes of Zeus showed the god raising his thunderbolt and looking in the direction in which he will hurl it. The artist of the statuette did not represent the giant for whom the thunderbolt was intended but simply left the victim to the imagination of the Greek who knew that the battle par excellence in which Zeus engaged was the gigantomachy. Like a poet the artist could on occasion speak a figurative language and included synecdoche among his figures of speech. So too the painter of vases represented Athena as brandishing her spear not just as a pose but at the moment of attack. He simplified the monomachia with a giant which another painter depicted.¹

This method of abbreviating a story seems to have been in vogue in statuary at Athens toward the end of the archaic period. At that time statues of the tyrannicides were set up in the agora which represented them as pressing forward with swords ready but the tyrants whom they sought to slay were not present to complete the group. Every Athenian, however, readily imagined the missing tyrants. Another example of abbreviation is a headless and armless statue of Athena in Dresden (Fig. 1) which when complete represented the goddess as ready to attack. Although of Roman date the symmetrically arranged folds of drapery show that the statue was copied from an original of the early fifth century. The central vertical fold which descends from the waist is divided into eleven squares in each of which a deity fights a giant.² For the most part these deities cannot be identified. In the first panel at the top which is partly covered by the drapery a horse dashes over a prostrate giant. The horse must belong to a

¹Gerhard *AV*. I, 6.

²For a clearer reproduction of the figures see Overbeck, *Kunstmythologie* pl. V, no. 5.

chariot of Zeus which appears in scenes of the gigantomachy on vases.³ He should of course be the first in the series because he was the supreme Olympian and stood beside Athena in the battle, as he did in a temple group at Delphi which Euripides describes.⁴ Another deity, Artemis, may be recognized in the second panel from the bottom where a goddess with exposed shoulder vigorously attacks a giant. In three other squares goddesses appear if drapery completely enveloping the form is an indication of sex. If a fifth panel contains a female figure or contained one in the original, then the statue itself is the sixth goddess. Her opponent is readily imagined. The six gods and six goddesses constitute the Twelve who were especially prominent in Athenian religious tradition. To them was dedicated an altar in the late sixth century in the market place of the city where recently their sanctuary has been discovered.⁵ Nearby stood the stoa of Zeus on a wall of which was a painting of the Twelve.⁶ Aristophanes the master of Athenian comedy mentions them and their priest had a seat reserved for him in the theatre of the city. It is a safe conjecture that the Dresden Athena is derived from an Athenian original.

The sculptor commemorated Athena as a protagonist in the gigantomachy and overcame the limitation which statuary imposed upon a comprehensive representation of the theme by carving upon the drapery of the goddess the monomachias of her eleven Olympian associates. These were probably inspired by similar scenes embroidered upon a garment which was presented to the goddess like the peplos which was woven for her most sacred image in the Erechtheum. Garments decorated with human or divine figures were in vogue in the sixth century as the François vase shows. The Ergastinae who made the sacred peplos for Athena are known to have woven figures of deities into it because Plutarch alludes to figures of Zeus and Athena on one which was carried in procession in the late fourth century.⁷ The biographer does not say that these two divinities were depicted fighting giants but there is no reason to believe that the maidens who wove the sacred peplos repeated one and the same subject indefinitely. That the Athena of the Acropolis was represented in the mid-sixth century with a broad vertical fold of her drapery divided into squares is attested by the earliest known Panathenaic amphora (Fig. 2). Since this militant Athena, who is also to be conceived as attacking a giant, decorated a vase which was given as a

³e. g. Cook, *Zeus*, II, p. 84, fig. 46.

⁴*Ion* 210-5.

⁵*AJA*, 1937, p. 177.

⁶Pausanias I, 3, 3.

⁷*Demetrios* 12.

prize in games in her honor it is reasonable to regard it as an adaptation of the famous statue of the goddess which stood in her sanctuary on the Acropolis. The squares of the central fold of her drapery are filled with simple linear pattern but these may be regarded as an easy substitute for the figured squares on the corresponding central fold of the Dresden Athena. The conclusion seems certain that this statue is in its origin Athenian.

This conclusion implies that the gigantomachy loomed large in the religious tradition of the city. Such was the fact. The famous battle was the subject of a pedimental group of the large archaic temple of Athena on the Acropolis. At the center stood appropriately the goddess in the act of striking down a giant. Themes for gable compositions were very significant as those of the Parthenon amply prove. The reason why Athena as the slayer of a giant assumed such importance on the Acropolis is not far to seek. As the giants stormed Olympus and were beaten down by Athena and other deities so enemies that stormed the Athenian citadel, the abode of the goddess, would be repulsed with her help. Athena represents the Athenians, the giant the enemy who attacks them. The giants were conceived as wild, insolent and wicked. In the sixth century Theognis seems to have transferred their quality of insolence to the Persians who then threatened his home city.⁸ The comparison of Greeks with gods, and their enemies with giants was made again in the elaborate gigantomachy which adorned the great altar of Zeus and Athena at Pergamon. It commemorated the defeat of the Galatians. Somewhat earlier Attalus had sent to Athens for dedication on the Acropolis statues of a dead giant, a dead Persian and a dying Galatian to commemorate with a similar metaphor the same defeat of the wild Galatians. Centuries later in the days of Julian the Apostate an oracle which was given to that ruler reveals the longevity of this metaphor: "Zeus destroyed of old the race of giants most hateful to the blessed gods; the king of the Romans god-like Julian laid waste the cities and walls of the Persians."⁹

⁸v. 775.

⁹*The Greek Anthology* (Loeb) V, p. 107.

NICOLAS KNUPFER'S VENUS AT RICHMOND

WANDERINGS OF A MOTIF

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Among the works of the "German Dutchman" Nicolas Knupfer², the *Venus* in the Cook collection at Richmond stands out as a picture of particular charm. It bears no signature but is sufficiently authenticated by its close stylistic relationship to a number of signed works. Although rather little is known of the artistic background and development of the master, it is hardly doubtful that he painted the Richmond picture around 1655.

A characteristic feature of Knupfer's art, which is well borne out in our picture, is the fresh and unbiased realism displayed in the details of the nude figure as well as of the other parts. In contrast to this, the pose of *Venus* seems strangely "idealistic" just in the light of that detail-realism. It shows a formalistic sway and conscious arrangement that suggest a manneristic background of the painting which otherwise is a typical work of the high baroque. In addition, the gesture of *Venus*' right hand seems to be very poorly motivated; her hand seems to grasp something that is not there, and her head as well as *Cupid*'s are turned toward the same part of the picture without seeing anything.

Part of this puzzle can be explained by pointing to a *Venus* by Lambert Sustris³ in the Louvre. This work, painted by an Italianized Dutchman about a hundred years before, informs us about the manneristic ancestry of the Richmond picture. The idealistic pose of Knupfer's *Venus* appears here almost identical, but in a configuration which accounts for the otherwise meaningless attitude of that figure: The goddess is caressing two doves and is looking down to them with a charming and charmed expression on her face. Yet curiously enough, Sustris' picture does not seem to have been the immediate source of Knupfer's work. There exists a drawing in the Munich printroom⁴ which in some respects is closer to the Dutch picture than Sustris' work is. *Cupid* is here sitting on *Venus*' couch in an attitude closely

¹This article formed part of a *Festschrift* offered to Walter Friedländer on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday but not published at that time.

²On Knupfer see H. Schneider in Thieme-Becker's dictionary s. v.

³On Sustris see R. A. Peltzer in: *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des ah. Kaiserhauses* (Vienna) XXXI, 1913-1914, and K. Feuchtmayr in Thieme-Becker.

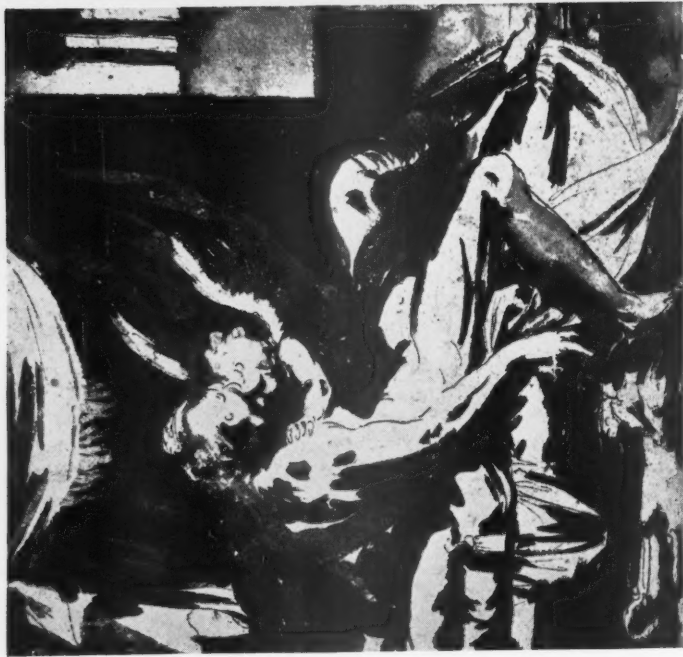
⁴See the Munich *Handzeichnungenwerk* no. 139 (*Parmeggianino*); now among the copies after Parmeggianino (Inv. no. 32349; 222 by 204 mm). Peltzer, l. c. p. 232, note 2, mentions a "corresponding" engraving which occurs as a titlepage in: *Lodovico Inig, Francisci Mazzola Parmensis graphides*, Bologna, 1788, but he calls the engraving (or its source) and the Munich drawing "variations" of the Louvre picture. The engraving was not accessible to me.



NICOLAS KNUPFER: VENUS AND CUPID
Cook Collection, Richmond



ADRIAEN VAN DER WERFF: VENUS AND CUPID
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam



FOLLOWER OF PARMEGGIANINO: VENUS AND CUPID
Printroom, Munich



LAMBERT SUSTRIS: VENUS AND CUPID
Louvre, Paris

related to Knupfer's but quite different from Sustris'; also, the "realistic" vessel in front is present here, although its location is less "accidental" than the one given it — and the slippers — by Knupfer. Now, this drawing was called *Parmeggianino* or *copy after Parmeggianino* in Munich. It cannot be by the master himself because it does not show his individual style of drawing and is much too poor to be his (note, f. i., the impossible rendering of Venus' left leg); it can hardly be an exact *copy after Parmeggianino* because the close relationship between Venus' right hand and the doves, which is so convincing in Sustris' picture, was spoiled by their being separated from each other. On the other hand, the drawing cannot be Knupfer's since his drawings are altogether different in technique and style; its general appearance is thoroughly Italian.

This complicated relationship between the three works can best be explained by the assumption that Knupfer knew either the Munich drawing or a corresponding engraving (see note 4) and that both the Munich drawing and Sustris' painting in the Louvre go back to a common source. It is highly probable that this source was indeed a work by Parmeggianino, the more so as he has dealt with the theme of Venus embraced by Cupid in at least one drawing⁵ (although its composition differs from ours by virtue of the added figure of Vulcan). Also, it is rather improbable that Sustris should have been the real "inventor" of the Louvre composition since this picture is rather out of his general line; the pointedly manneristic character of the main figure was considered, by Sustris' main biographer, to be "strangely" different from the more titianesque forms of his other works.⁶

Another Dutch adaptation of the same motif seems likewise to hark back to Parmeggianino (or to the Munich composition derived from him). This is a picture by Cæsar van Everdingen, now in the Dresden Gallery⁷, which is called *Bacchus with two nymphs* but which most probably represents the Latin saying, "Sine Cerere et Baccho friget Venus," if we may judge from many similar renderings of the same adage in Dutch art of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The main figure of Venus is, in the reverse, an almost exact replica of the Parmeggianino type except for her outstretched right (left) leg and her left (right) hand whose position has most reasonably been changed into a supporting attitude. The embracing Cupid of the Munich

⁵L. Fröhlich-Bum, *Parmeggianino und der Manierismus*, Vienna, 1921, p. 97 and fig. 116 (engraving by H. van der Borcht); also engraved (in the reverse) in: *Varii disegni inventati dal celebre Francesco Mazzola detto il Parmeggianino tratti dalla raccolta Zanettiana incisi in rame da Antonio Faldoni*, Venezia, 1786 (this engraving is dated 1735 and dedicated to Michael Jabach).

⁶Peltzer l. c. p. 232.

⁷A. von Schneider, *Caravaggio und die Niederländer*, Marburg, 1933, p. 78 and plate 34.

drawing was replaced by the uplooking figure of Ceres. Bacchus, Cupid and the two satyrs are watching from the left, rounding off the composition on that side.

Finally, there is an almost exact copy in the reverse after Knupfer's picture, painted in 1788 by the Austrian, Martin Johann Schmidt (the so-called Kremsserschmidt⁸). Knupfer's composition has been cut down somewhat, the old woman has disappeared, and the rest has been translated into the fluent and blurred idiom of the late Rococo, but otherwise hardly anything has been changed, even in the minor details.

These are the factual data concerning the five works that show the same motif. It is certainly strange to find this motif in the works of masters of widely differing characters and schools, and in compositions which at least partly present quite different aspects. This fact cannot be "explained"; we can only realize that the motif must have appealed to those masters as being a happy characterization of the charm and perhaps the lure of Venus. At the same time this fact emphasizes the tremendous importance of what we may call the pictorial tradition in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the more so as we have by no means to do with uncreative imitators but with quite respectable masters who in many of their works have displayed a great amount of originality. But we have now to ask ourselves what the "content"⁹ of each of these works really is, and here we shall find an astounding variety in spite of their making use of the same figure in almost exactly the same way.

The motif of the lying Venus embraced by Cupid seems to have been introduced into Renaissance art by Michelangelo. His *invenzione* executed by Pontormo in the 'thirties (Florence, Uffizi)¹⁰ has been used and varied by a number of manneristic painters such as Bronzino (Rome, Pal. Colonna).¹¹ A similar motif appears, although in a considerably quieter form, in a composition painted by Titian during the 'forties (Florence, Uffizi); it is possible that the Cupid of the Munich drawing¹² harks back to that picture although there is also a chance that Titian might have made use of a Parmeggianino idea.

⁸Reproduced in: *Das Barockmuseum im unteren Belvedere*, second edition, Vienna, 1934, no. 286, ill. p. 227.

⁹For the term "content" see: Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology*, New York, 1939.

¹⁰H. Thode, *Michelangelo, Kritische Untersuchungen*, II, p. 324.

¹¹H. Voss, *Malerei der Spätrenaissance in Florenz und Rom*, Berlin, 1920, p. 214. See also Bronzino's famous *Allegory* in the London National Gallery. The poor pasticcio in the Uffizi which combines Michelangelo's *Cupid* with Bronzino's *Venus* (photo Alinari Parte Seconda no. 451 as Bronzino) is certainly not a work of the latter.

¹²Very close to the Munich *Cupid* is the one in Palma Giovane's picture in Cassel which shows the forge of Vulcan in the background.

Within this pictorial tradition there has been an interesting shifting and changing of the content. True, we have a representation of Venus and Cupid in each case, but the interpretations differ widely. The accessories of Michelangelo's work are allegorical: they have not as yet been fully explained, but there is no doubt that the masks denote vanity, the futility of earthly goods and pleasures.¹³ This rather strong emphasis on the allegorical point pervades the whole picture, the more so as there is no action proper indicated. We are almost tempted to call it a picture of primarily allegorical content. It is entirely different with Bronzino. The allegorical part of Michelangelo-Pontormo's work has here been replaced by a luscious satyr who steals Cupid's quiver, the statuesque composure of the main group by lively action; the whole picture looks rather like a *Jupiter and Antiope* story than a mere *Venus and Cupid* composition.¹⁴ Titian avoided not only Michelangelo's allegorical emphasis but also Bronzino's mythological action; he confined himself to the quiet interpretation of a lyrical mood.

Turning to our particular Venus pattern, we find that Sustris (perhaps following a lost Parmeggianino composition) represented *Venus expecting Mars*, who is seen entering her room in the right background. This is quite a novel feature since its main idea is neither an allegory (Michelangelo) nor a dramatic action (Bronzino) nor a purely lyrical mood (Titian) but a *tension*, in fact an erotic tension, a preparation of a lovers' meeting. It is true that the picture contains *elements* of allegory (the two doves and the feast of lovers in the background) as well as of action (Mars entering) and of lyrical mood (face of Venus); but they are of secondary importance when compared with that erotic tension which permeates everything and which is particularly evident in Venus' pose — the very pose which was copied so often, most probably on account of that particular appeal. The Munich drawing retains the doves but renounces any other indication of action or tension; the vessel tends to introduce a "genre" feeling despite the intimation of a temple (?) in the background. That genre feeling has become prominent in Knupfer's picture — as we may expect from a Dutch master of the seventeenth century who did not belong to the "classicistic" painters of the Amsterdam Town Hall or the Huis ten Bosch murals. The Anderson photograph of Knupfer's picture bears the title *Donna nuda con Cupido*; to an Italian mind this could not possibly be a Venus. But even Knupfer himself does not seem to have been quite sure about it. The little boy is a Cupid all

¹³E. Panofsky, l. c., p. 89 and note 75. See also the late sixteenth century Netherlandish painting in Berlin no. 652.

¹⁴Small wonder that a baroque painter like Luca Giordano should have followed this pattern rather closely (Napels).

right since he has wings (although very tiny ones). But the doves are not there (instead there are the slippers), and in the background there is no Mars but an old woman who looks very much like the well-known figures often seen in dubious "society" *intérieurs* of contemporary Dutch paintings, and who casts a glance at the beholder the meaning of which is hardly doubtful at all. Thus Anderson's printer was right: it really is a *Donna nuda con Cupido*. The Cupid and the pose of "Venus" are remnants of the old mythological-manneristic tradition, but the "content" is genre-like: Dutch-realistic-highbaroque. In contrast to this, Everdingen retained the mythological point although he transposed it from the plain *Venus* (or *Venus and Mars*) composition to his more complex "*Sine Cerere et Baccho friget Venus*" configuration. Yet this conception was strongly affected by genre-like features which become evident in any comparison with manneristic or purely classicistic representations of the same topic; and this is what we may expect from an artist who stands midway between the classicistic groups mentioned above and the more strictly realistic tendencies of the other Dutch schools of that time. Kremerschmidt finally, although copying Knupfer almost exactly, left out the old woman in the background, thus re-establishing the "mythological dignity"; yet he preserved Knupfer's other genre features such as the vessel in front. With this he gave as characteristic a Rococo interpretation in content as he did in technique and style.

But even a long time before Schmidt painted this typical Rococo work, classicistic tendencies had got a hold of the theme and restored to it the "classical" dignity of Michelangelo's composition. In fact, a painting by Adriaen van der Werff¹⁵, who stands on the borderline between late seventeenth century Dutch classicism and the early Rococo, is nothing else but a free copy, in the reverse, after Michelangelo-Pontormo's work. And again 100 years later, Ingres copied Sustris' Louvre picture in a beautiful pencil drawing¹⁶, thus emphasizing — as W. Friedländer has already pointed out¹⁷ — the close stylistic parallel between "manneristic classicism" of the nineteenth century and the corresponding phase of sixteenth century painting of which Sustris' picture is a characteristic representative.

¹⁵ Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, no. 2634; Hofstede de Groot no. 122.

¹⁶Peltzer l. c.; reproduced in *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, 1898, II, p. 195.

¹⁷Walter Friedländer, *Hauptströmungen der französischen Malerei von David bis Cézanne, I: Von David bis Delacroix*, Bielefeld — Leipzig, 1930, p. V.

MARCELLO VENUSTI AS COPYIST OF MICHELANGELO

By CHARLES DE TOLNAY

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Marcello Venusti (c. 1512-1579), an artist born at Como, achieved a certain notoriety around the middle of the sixteenth century in Rome, as reputedly the best copyist of Michelangelo. Vasari writes his praises: "From drawings and works of Michelangelo, he has made an infinite number of small works, and among other things, reproduced the whole wall of the *Last Judgment*, an unusual task, and marvellously done."¹ Vasari tells us further that Michelangelo's most intimate friend, Tomaso de' Cavalieri, "always favoured Marcello Venusti, and had him paint from drawings of Michelangelo."² It was from the copy of the *Last Judgment* which he made for Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, and not from the original, that most of the sixteenth century engravings of the subject were executed. If we are to believe a writer of the seventeenth century (G. Baglione, 1642) Michelangelo himself was very well satisfied with Venusti's copy.³

In the literature of Michelangelo up to this very day, Marcello Venusti's copy of the *Last Judgment* has been considered a thoroughly faithful reproduction. According to the author of the Great Monograph on the Sistine Chapel "the copy in Naples gives a clearer idea of the intentions of Michelangelo than does the original at Rome."⁴ This writer even goes so far as to claim that the original has been shortened a meter in its lower part, due to the fact that it does not show the rocks in the foreground under the resurrected, as does Venusti's copy. However, it takes only a glance to determine the essential differences between the work of the master and that of copyist.

With these facts in mind, it is interesting to ask oneself just how accurate Marcello Venusti intended to be in copying Michelangelo, and at what point he deliberately broke away from his model. If one could answer this question

¹Vasari *Opere*, ed. Milanesi, VII p. 575: "Con disegni di Ma., e di sue opere, ha fatto una infinità di cose similmente piccole; e fra l'altre, in una sua opera ha fatta tutta la facciata del Giudizio; che è cosa rara e condotta ottimamente."

²Vasari, *op cit.*: "il gen^{smo} Messer T. de' Cavalieri, che sempre l'ha favorito (ha) fatto dipignere, con disegni di Ma., una tavola per S. Giov. Laterano d'una Vergine Annunziata."

In another place Vasari (VII p. 272) again speaks of paintings which Marcello had executed from drawings of Michelangelo at the order of Cavalieri: "Annunziata nella chiesa della Pace; Annunziata di S. Giov. Laterano; Cristo che ora nell'orto."

³G. Baglione, *Le Vite de' Pittori Scultori et Architetti*. Fac-simile dell' edizione del 1642, Roma, 1935: p. 20: "egli (Marcello) lo condusse (la copia del Giudizio) tanto eccellentemente, che il Buonarroti gli pose grand' affettione, et imposegli molte altre cose."

⁴Steinmann, *Die Sixt. Kap.* Vol II p. 517: "Die ausserordentlich sorgfältig ausgeführte Kopie in Neapel (gibt) von den Ansichten Ma. 's eine deutlichere Vorstellung als das Original in Rom."

and determine the motives which made Venusti wish to differ in some respects from the master, it would be possible to conclude something about his personal tendencies both artistic and spiritual. Also we would have criteria for a more sound estimate of those elements in his work which derive from lost works of Michelangelo.

An unpublished painting by Marcello Venusti in a distinguished private collection in New York gives foundation for an attempt to answer these questions.

This painting represents the *Ascension of Christ* (Fig. 1). Each of the figures which it contains is copied from Michelangelo, as we shall show, but, it is interesting to observe that Marcello Venusti has not followed one work only of the master. He has combined parts of two different drawings of the *Resurrection*, to make of them one composition. It happens that the two models are still in existence, and so we can follow his working method quite closely.

Our copyist took the figure of Christ Risen from the celebrated drawing by Michelangelo in London, British Museum (Fig. 2, Frey, No. 59). The position of Christ's body, which rises up with arms crossed and head turned towards the sky, is identical with that of Venusti's painting, as is the shroud which prolongs the supple body by its curving line. He borrowed from the same drawing the three soldiers in the left background who are fleeing in fear. The three soldiers in the left foreground who seem to sleep profoundly and the elaborate pyramid made up of six people, in the right foreground, are exactly copied from the Michelangelo *Resurrection* drawing at Windsor (Fig. 3, Frey, No. 19). Finally, it is from this latter drawing that he took the solitary soldier in the background, at the head of the sarcophagus. Not only does each figure correspond exactly to a model by Michelangelo, but each group has been transferred in its entirety to the new composition.

We may deduce from this, that Michelangelo's representations of movement and posture were as canons of art in the eyes of Marcello Venusti, and he attempted to copy them scrupulously. His fidelity sometimes led him to make mistakes. In the *Ascension* painting, for example, he retained the pose of the principal figure of the right-hand group, the soldier, who, in Michelangelo's composition, recoils in fear when he sees Christ Risen; in Marcello Venusti's painting, when Christ is placed much higher up, this soldier is gazing at nothing in particular.

This reverence of Marcello Venusti for attitudes is likewise found in his contemporaries, for whom the great glory of Michelangelo consisted in his having created new postures and achieved a perfect representation of the



FIG. 1. MARCELLO VENUSTI: ASCENSION
Collection of Grenville Winthrop, New York

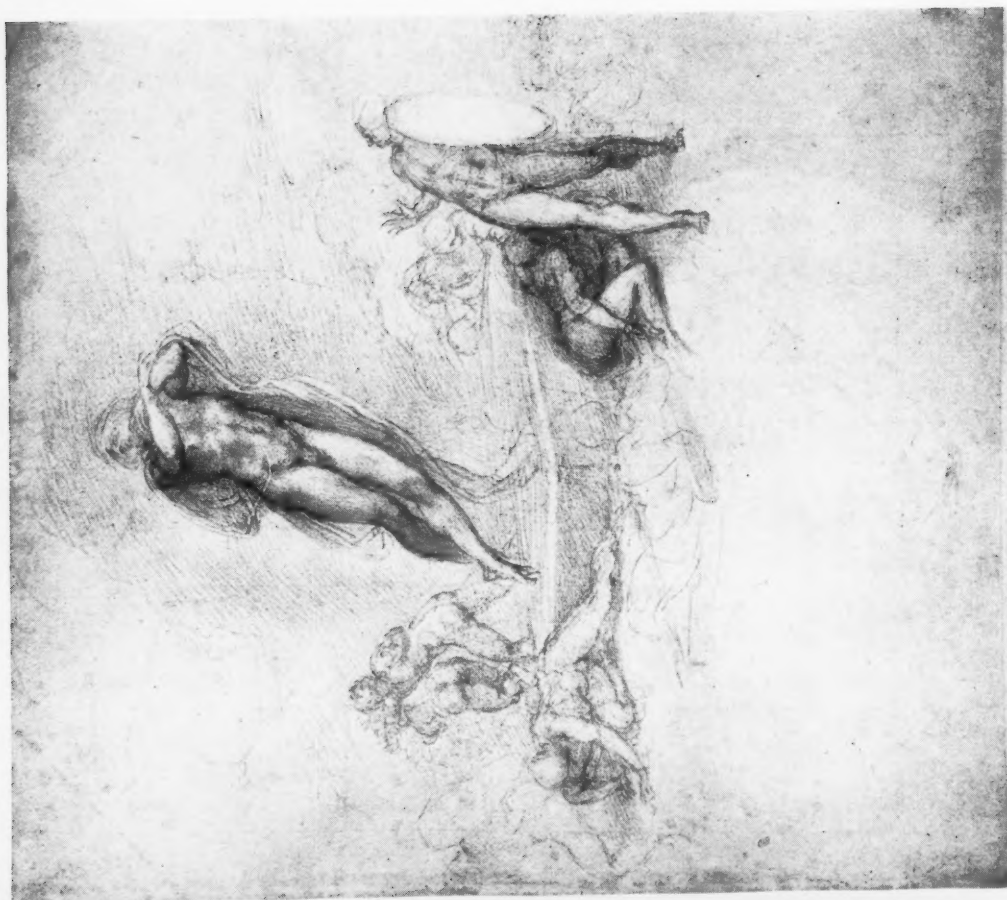


FIG. 2. MICHELANGELO: ASCENSION
British Museum, London

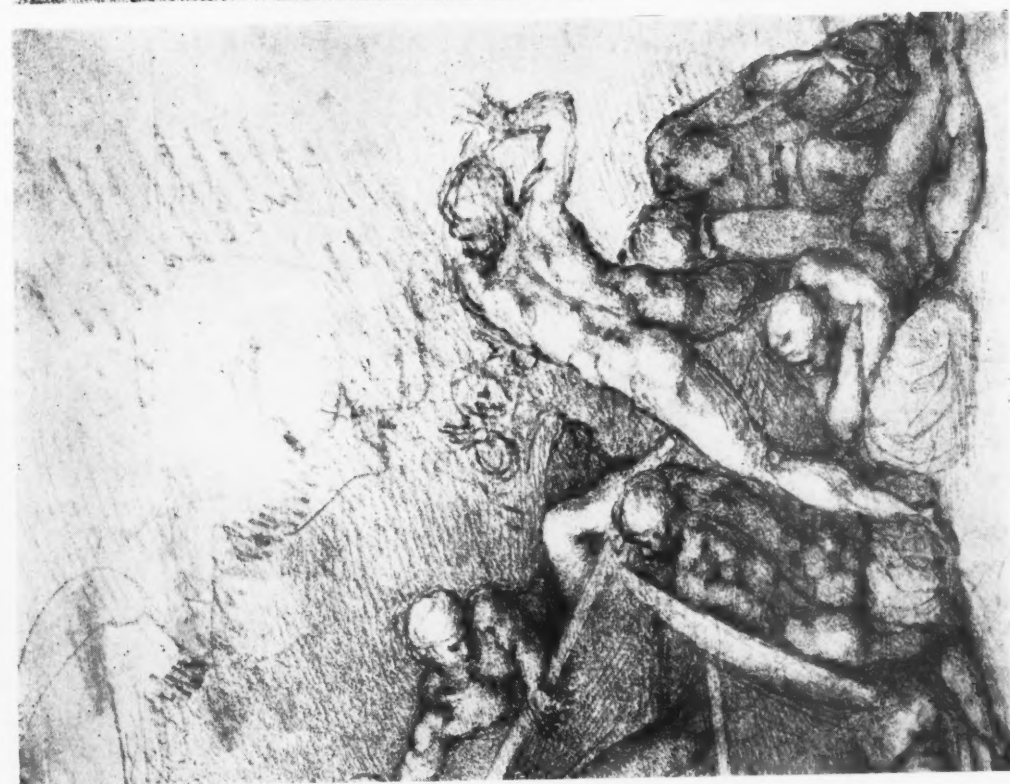


FIG. 3. MICHELANGELO: RESURRECTION
Windsor Castle, Windsor

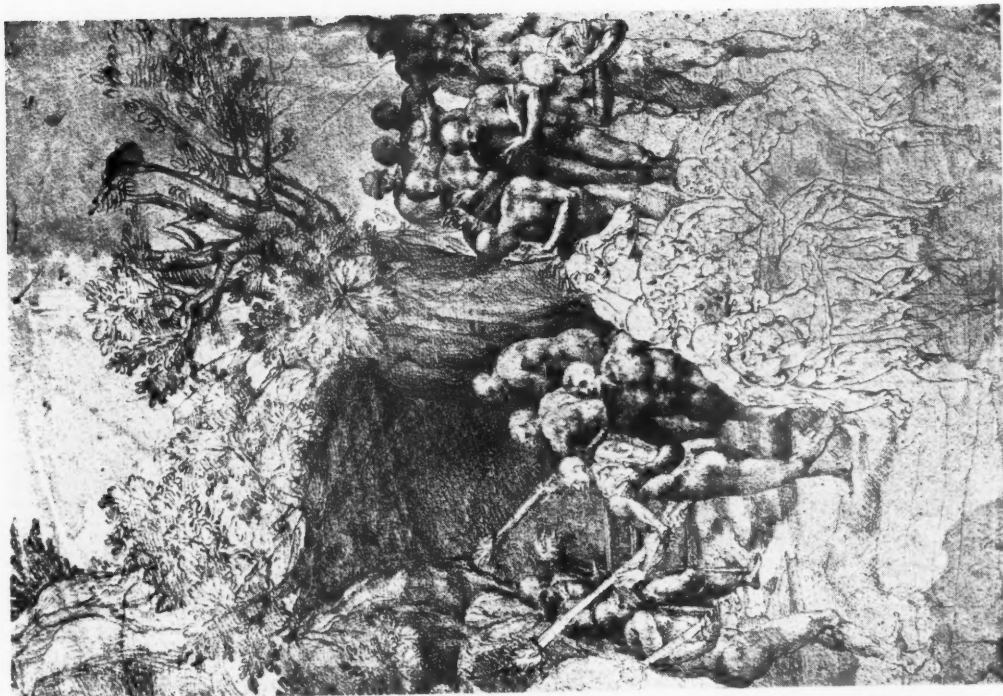


FIG. 4. DANIELE DA VOLTERRA: BURIAL OF CHRIST
Louvre, Paris

human body. In accord with this Vasari⁵ writes, apropos of the *Last Judgment* by Michelangelo, "he wished only to paint a perfect and properly proportioned composition of the human body, in the most diverse poses, and also the passions of the soul . . . He shows the way to the grand style . . ."

But the composition and content of the works of Michelangelo were less valued by Marcello Venusti. In these things he tried to "better" his model.

In the two drawings of Michelangelo, the figure of Christ, which is just coming forth from the sarcophagus, is not strange to the group of soldiers who surround the tomb; the force of the composition results from the tension created by the contrast between the upward soaring of the body of Christ and the centrifugal movement which this elevation causes among the rest of the figures. Marcello Venusti places Christ at such a distance above the soldiers that all compositional relationship is lost. In addition, he separates one from another among the group of soldiers, and even inserts a rock between the two foreground groups.

It is possible to attribute the rather loose character of this composition to the North Italian taste of Venusti. The composition of Michelangelo which is compact and which creates a sense of space by the plasticity of the forms, is essentially Florentine; it doubtless could not content the copyist who, as we know, was not from Mantua, as Vasari says, but originally from Como, and whose youthful works reflect the influence of Lombard artists.⁶

Finally, Marcello Venusti brought about changes in what we may call the "content" of Michelangelo's work.

All the soldiers who, in Michelangelo, are nude appear in Venusti's painting garbed in antique dress; and even in front of Christ, who should be nude, there is a veil. This amazing prudishness is understandable when we recall that, in the middle of the century when this painting was executed, a strong moralizing tendency, sponsored by the Church, took hold of the Italian public. This tendency culminated in 1563 with the proscription of all nudity by the Council of Trent. This movement was already prepared for by Pietro Aretino's criticism of the nudity in the *Last Judgment*, and by the order which Paul IV gave to Daniele da Volterra in 1559 to veil the figures of this work. We find that the authors of treatises on art, who appeared after

⁵Vasari ed. Frey p. 159ff. "non ha voluto . . . dipignere altro (nel Giudizio) che la perfetta e proporzionatissima composizione del corpo humano et in diversissime attitudini, non sol questo, ma insieme gli affetti delle passioni . . . dell'animo . . . e mostra la via della gran maniera e degli ignudi."

⁶Bertolotti, *Artisti lombardi a Roma nei secoli XV, XVI e XVII*, p. 101-112, establishes by means of written documents that Marcello was born at Como. A. Venturi (IX — vol. 6, p. 475 and ff.) rightly stresses the Lombard character of his youthful works.

the Council of Trent (such as Gilio da Fabriano, Molanus, Paoletti, Borghini), condemned nudity in religious paintings.

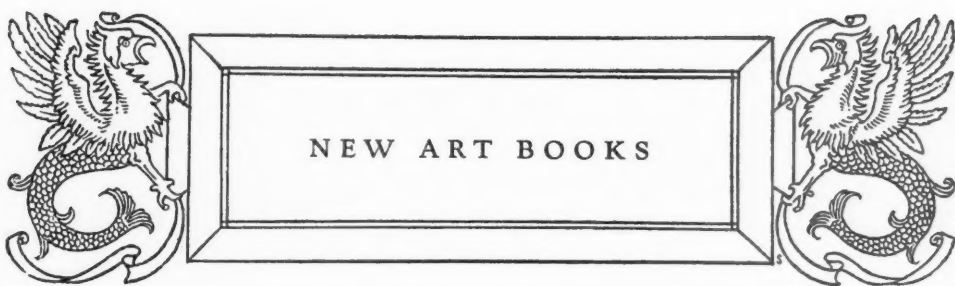
The fact that these authors also claimed that sacred scenes be represented accurately and according to "historical truth" also explains, no doubt, why Marcello Venusti specified the place of the *Resurrection*, which Michelangelo did not do. The scene, which in Michelangelo appears like the visionary space of a dream, limitless and losing itself in infinity, is placed by Marcello Venusti in a concrete setting, formed by the large rock of the tomb and the vista of a landscape to the right. This setting follows a North Italian scheme, rather widespread in Italy in the mid-sixteenth century (for example, the Florentine drawing in the Louvre — Fig. 4, Berenson, No. 1744 — attributed to Daniele da Volterra and representing the *Burial of Christ*).

These same authors also proclaim that religious paintings should edify the faithful. The composition of Michelangelo presents the *Resurrection of Christ* as symbolic of the liberation of the human soul; the soul returns to its home, freeing itself by a sudden motion from its terrestrial and bodily prison, that prison which still binds the soldiers around the tomb.

In Marcello Venusti it is altogether different. He completely changes the sense of Michelangelo's composition. Christ, who floats in the air surrounded by a halo, is like an apparition. The painting stresses the miraculous character of the event, leading the faithful to worship. The platonic conception of Michelangelo has been changed to that of an edifying miracle.

All the tendencies which we have just analyzed exist in other copies made by Marcello Venusti from works by Michelangelo. Thus, in his copy of the *Last Judgment* (Naples, Museo Nazionale) painted in 1549, while the artist holds faithfully to the attitudes of the figures in the original, he again changes the relationships among the groups by putting more space among and around them, and he changes the whole conception of the work by making a cosmic catastrophe into an edifying miracle. Above the Christ-in-judgment he places the dove of the Holy Ghost, and at the very top, in the center, he inserts the figure of God the Father, with his hand extended in benediction, from the Sistine vault. Thus he represents the Trinity.

Marcello Venusti, who certainly was not a great artistic personality, was not, however, merely a copyist of Michelangelo. An exact translator of the master's inventions in posing figures, he deviates from his model in changing the composition and transforming the content. His Lombard taste, and even more, the conformist spirit which he reveals by his attachment to the Counter-Reformation and to the opinions of his contemporaries, make Marcello Venusti appear the reverse of Michelangelo rather than his true successor.



PAOLO UCCELLO, ANDREA DEL CASTAGNO, DOMENICO VENEZIANO (COLLEZIONE VALORI PLASTICI). By Mario Salmi. Milano, Ulrico Hoepli, 203 pp., 224 pls.

The title page of this volume is silent about the fact that it is the second edition of a book published about five years ago for the first time. A reviewer however does well to state this fact, since it is perhaps the greatest tacit acknowledgment of the value of a book of this kind. How few art books ever achieve such a bookseller's success! For the reviewer it is almost superfluous after that to try to attract further attention to this publication by describing its contents and its merits.

This second edition is not very different from the first one. Substantial changes have not been introduced. The vast critical apparatus has been brought up to date with references to the most recent publications. Some new material has been added, among which Domenico Veneziano's Madonna in the collection of the King of Rumania deserves special mention. The most important change is purely technical. The size of the volume has been reduced to a very handy one. And yet the quality of the illustrations has not suffered, thanks to the change from the rather questionable heliotypes of the first edition to remarkably neat and well-printed half-tones. Many who have owned the first edition will doubtlessly gladly replace it with this much more pleasant and useful new one.

The importance of the volume is clearly indicated by its title. Three of the most outstanding painters of the earlier Florentine Renaissance, who up to now could be studied only in general works, outdated monographs, and essays scattered over a great number of periodicals, are treated here for the first time in a monographic form. The text gives a penetrating analysis of the individual personalities in regard to their personal development as well as their historical significance. Catalogues of the extant as well as the lost works of the masters are very conveniently added for reference. And an immense bibliographical material is critically disposed of in the truly ponderous notes which accompany the plates. As a matter of fact, this is a really basic book for whoever wants to study the history of Florentine painting, basic not only in its comprehensiveness, but also in the thoroughness with which the material has been mastered by a critical mind.

—ULRICH MIDDELDORF

STUDIES IN ICONOLOGY — HUMANISTIC THEMES IN THE ART OF THE RENAISSANCE.

By Erwin Panofsky. New York, Oxford University Press, 1939. 262 pp., 92 pls.

One of Dr. Panofsky's major contributions to art historical criticism has been to demonstrate through lectures and publications that the analysis of iconography parallels in importance the analysis of style. His recent book dissects and illustrates the critical method by which a study of iconography may yield those basic principles — the author terms them "symbolical values" — which permit us to penetrate and formulate the fundamental meaning of a work of art, an artistic personality or a period in the history of art.

As a group the essays in this book reveal the vital method of a distinguished art

historian at work, proceeding methodically in each case from the examination and analysis of data through interpretation and correlation to a final critical synthesis—complete, consistent, and indestructible. The most remarkable thing about the book is that the author manages to communicate not only his thought but his power, endowing his readers, temporarily at least, with a share of his own sharp critical penetration. Dr. Panofsky takes his disciples with him as fellow explorers rather than as observers in his exciting critical adventures. Another striking aspect of the book is that no matter how complex are the processes of the comparisons and analyses, the conclusions emerge as internally consistent as geometric theorems and so concretely envisioned that many are outlined in diagrams or synoptical tables.

Dr. Panofsky's basic assumption is that no phenomenon is accidental but always fundamentally representative of its special time and place. Thus the history of one motif consistently analysed may become the basis of a stylistic cross-section of history, a sound study of the work of one artist must throw light on his entire time, and a correct evaluation of a stylistic movement will clarify the art, literature, and history of a period. The individual essays in this book illustrate these possible approaches towards a final synthesized interpretation of the art of the Renaissance. Each essay is a methodological example as well as an isolated critical achievement; the book should be read with this point in mind.

The first essay is entitled "The Early History of Man in Two Cycles of Paintings by Piero di Cosimo." It begins by identifying the subject of Piero di Cosimo's painting in the Wadsworth Atheneum as the *Finding of Vulcan*, and ends by reconstructing a comprehensive cycle of paintings very probably planned as a unit for the Florentine palace of Francesco del Pugliesi. The critical findings embodied in this essay dovetail perfectly. The iconographical identifications lead not only to a plausible reconstruction of a unique cycle of related paintings but by pointing Piero di Cosimo's fundamental attitudes as seen in these paintings they lead to a definition of his unique personality and style. "In his pictures we are faced, not with the polite nostalgia of a civilized man who longs, or pretends to long, for the happiness of a primitive age, but with the subconscious recollection of a primitive who happened to live in a period of sophisticated civilization." The integrated cycle of primitive paintings becomes a symbol of Piero's style—at the end of the essay the artist is definitively characterized as an "atavistic" phenomenon. Dr. Panofsky's critical method opens doors in a dozen directions. In this instance I am tempted—perhaps rashly—to carry on the author's findings to a larger symbol than he ventures upon—to see in Piero's subconscious nostalgic archaism a symbol of the late Florentine quattrocento, looking back from the threshold of complex sixteenth century realism and science to an earlier age that was traditional, clear-cut, primitive. Every phase of culture in the second half of the fifteenth century in Florence is characterized by a tendency towards archaism, and Piero di Cosimo's seemingly unique attitude is perhaps explicable as a symptom of this archaistic attitude.

The two following essays trace the evolution of the motifs of "Father Time" and "Blind Cupid" from Classical times through the Middle Ages and to the Renaissance. These cross-sections result in fundamental definitions of Classical, Medieval and Renaissance style. Dr. Panofsky's method is always to proceed from the concrete to the general, and in the Father Time essay we find ourselves proceeding in a constantly widening radius of apprehension from a study of the *figure* to an illuminating *concept* of Time throughout the ages. "Petrarch's Time was not an abstract philosophical principle but a concrete alarming power"—here in a sentence is a newly minted touchstone for determining the style of the Middle Ages as compared with that of the Renaissance. It is worth noting at this point that the spontaneity of Dr. Panofsky's vocabulary matches the freshness of his concepts. He remarks, for instance, that Kronos, as the senior member of the Greek and Roman Pantheon "was professionally old"!

The final essays are devoted to "The Neoplatonic Movement in Florence and North Italy" and "The Neoplatonic Movement and Michelangelo." The first of these

essays is of the greatest interest to this writer for its definition of Renaissance, Manneristic and Baroque style on the basis of the different organizations of sculptured form in relation to the beholder's eye in each period. In the last essay I would like to call special attention to the fine brief formulation of Michelangelo's essential style and to the "symbolical" history of funerary sculpture from Egyptian times to the Renaissance which prefaces the study of Michelangelo's *Tomb of Julius II*.

Dr. Panofsky thinks so naturally in basic terms that every one of these essays contains formulations each of which would justify an independent study. The contrasted attitude of the Mediæval and Renaissance mind towards antiquity and the parallelism between the sciences of perspective and history in the Renaissance with the dual awareness of visual and historic distances are but two typical examples.

An underlying assumption of the book is that the reader is thoroughly acquainted with Classical, Mediæval and Renaissance literature and art, and that he has at his fingertips a clear conception of Classical, Mediæval, Renaissance, Manneristic, and Baroque style. An additional short introductory chapter defining these stylistic periods in their broadest terms would have given the book greater cohesive force — though probably this suggested chapter should be a volume in itself. Dr. Panofsky's book is not intended for the casual reader. One of the dangers of this type of criticism is certainly that a pat acceptance of conclusions and definitions is easy and pleasant but will do the reader no good. Another danger is the temptation to the young critic of selecting and molding material to fit a necessarily consistent scheme. One is forced to conclude that the practice of Dr. Panofsky's method is safe only in superlatively able hands. There is no doubt, in any case, that his criticism will be a great stimulus to penetrative and creative thinking and writing; attentive reading of this book is a vitalizing experience recommended to all art historians.

WESTERN EUROPEAN PAINTING OF THE RENAISSANCE. By *Frank Jewett Mather, Jr.* Henry Holt, New York, 1939.

An extremely readable and understandable formulation of the difference in attitude and style between Italy and Western Europe introduces the body of Professor Mather's work. A vast amount of material is so well introduced, organized and described that a tremendously difficult project appears in an easily readable and digestible form. Naturally a great many interesting critical problems of chronology, attribution and stylistic evolution had to be shelved in the process of sifting and organizing the material — but for the purpose it serves Professor Mather's book is irreproachable. It has the quality — and serves the purpose — of a fine series of lectures. It is really a very palatable and yet very scholarly lecture course in book form, with illustrations instead of slides. The personal tone and frankly personal opinion hold the reader's interest by approximating round-table discussion, and yet every portion of the book is carefully articulated and the material organized so as to clearly formulate major trends and styles.

SASSETTA. By *John Pope-Hennessy*. London, Chatto and Windus, 1939.

A worthy successor to Mr. Pope-Hennessy's *Giovanni di Paolo*, this book is beautifully printed and illustrated, the material remarkably organized, the critical analyses fresh and just. The simple chronological plan with marginal dates heading each page gives the material a crisp unity. Especially commendable is the well considered use of contemporary documents and source material for reconstructing the execution of works — the Font in the Baptistry of San Giovanni is a case in point. Valuable contributions to Sassetta criticism are the conclusive discussion of Sassetta's part in the *Madonna of the Snow*, the uniting of the Chigi and Griggs picture as two parts of one panel, the pointing of Sassetta's stylistic debts to the *Très Riches Heures*,

the refutation of Mr. Berenson's heretofore accepted idea that Sassetta was a pupil of Paolo di Giovanni Fei and the establishing of a connection with Gualtiero di Giovanni, and, most interesting, the convincing reconstruction of the St. Francis Altarpiece. In this connection a photographic reconstruction would have been valuable to show the æsthetic whole formed by the combination of the National Gallery and Chantilly panels. An interesting point made is that the altarpiece stood on a high altar and, as the panels were high off the ground, were painted with this in mind.

My only criticism of the book is that Sassetta is too briefly and casually placed as a representative of quattrocento style. The interesting series of developments which led up to quattrocento style — and the manner in which quattrocento style was formed to some extent in reaction from late trecento style — are not touched upon, nor is the important stylistic relationship between Sassetta and the Lorenzetti.

—JEAN LIPMAN

GEORGE CALEB BINGHAM. By *Albert Christ-Janer*. Illustrated. Small quarto. Dodd, Mead & Co., New York, 1940.

Until as recently as 1935 George Caleb Bingham was a practically unknown native artist and presumably because he happened to have worked exclusively in Missouri at a time when that state was a pioneer settlement on our western frontier. Born in 1811, he first practiced professionally as a portrait painter in Columbia, Missouri. Though in 1837 he studied for three months at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia, by the spring of 1840 he was back in Missouri where before 1844 he completed his first important genre canvas, the *Jolly Flatboatmen*, and from that date he devoted himself almost exclusively to painting typical American scenes of similar type. Today these pictures are rightly appraised as an artistic heritage of incalculable value. They preserve for posterity a record of native life in the vernacular of forthright graphic expression. The author is to be congratulated upon providing us with an engrossing characterization of the artist and the man in a studiously documented volume illustrated with reproductions of his most important works.

ARTIST IN MANHATTAN. By *Jerome Myers*. Illustrated. Octavo. American Artists' Group, New York, 1940.

Mr. Myers whose pictures constitute a very original contribution to American art has written an unusual volume in which one gathers from innumerable glimpses a portrait of the artist as interesting as any of those he has painted. In twenty-seven chapters he manages by indirection to tell one a great deal about the various art movements of the immediate past, his teachers, his contemporaries, his methods and his artistic creed. No less than one hundred of his paintings, pastels and drawings, many of them accompanied by admirable descriptions and poetic interpretations are included at the end of the volume. Maurice Prendergast was one of Myers' friends and in a way their paintings have an artistic affinity evidenced in a staccato spotting of joyous coloring that is a constant joy.

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Contents

AN EARLY ANNUNCIATION BY
ALESSO BALDOVINETTI

By RUTH WEDGWOOD KENNEDY
Northampton, Massachusetts

Page 139

AN EARLY WORK BY VERROCCHIO

By W. R. VALENTINER
Detroit, Michigan

Page 150

A STATUE OF ATHENA GIGANTOPHONUS

By GEORGE W. ELDERKIN
Princeton, New Jersey

Page 159

NICOLAS KNUPFER'S VENUS AT RICHMOND

WANDERINGS OF A MOTIF

By WOLFGANG STECHOW
Oberlin, Ohio

Page 162

MARCELLO VENUSTI AS COPYIST
OF MICHELANGELO

By CHARLES DE TOLNAY
Princeton, New Jersey

Page 169

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Reviewed by ULRICH MIDDELDORF, JEAN LIPMAN,
AND FREDERIC FAIRCHILD SHERMAN

Page 177

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